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# Park Council News

## THE PARK COUNCIL OPPOSES PROPOSITION 13 - Susan Watson

The Contra Costa Park Council officers voted unanimously in April to oppose State Proposition 13 (Jarvis-Gann initiative) on the June 6th ballot. We believe that our readership deserves a thorough explanation of our stand.

For nearly 27 years, the Park Council has encouraged the acquisition of park lands for recreational, scenic, and historic purposes. We have worked diligently for the formation of community service districts to supply local recreation and education needs. Most county urban areas now have service districts.

We have encouraged the participation of citizens in county service recreation districts, which are funded by a low property tax in each area. This system has worked efficiently. Although the taxes within county areas are "county funds", they are not divided among all county areas, but are used for the service district in which they are collected. This system preserves local control by the people who are the most likely to make the soundest decisions for the community - the area's residents. Good budget formation and projections are possible, and community concurrence in spending proposals is protected.

We have seen cities recognize that community centers and neighborhood parks play a large role in the physical and mental health of a society and upgrade their recreational facilities as conditions permit.

We have supported the formation of special districts for the protection and purchase of open space land, so that communities may have scenic land for outdoor recreation and so that land use decisions can be made with justice to both communities and developers.

We have supported the purchase of specific lands for the East Bay Regional Park District, Las Trampas, Briones, Black Diamond Mines, and more recently, Morgan Territory and Round Top additions and the joining of most of the County to the District in 1964. We joined others in supporting the acquisition of George Miller Jr., Diablo Foothills, and Martinez Waterfront Parks. We have been wellwishers of the District and, at times, severe critics, as readers of the Newsletter know.

We believe that citizens have made a difference over the last 27 years. The programs and the scenic land preserves that our county enjoys today have been the work of many people, most especially members of the Park Council.

All of these accomplishments could be severely crippled and eventually destroyed by one day's events.

If Proposition 13 is passed, we should expect to see the following:

### Financial Impact

The county service areas will have their funds cut at least 60%. Distribution will be made by the county to all public services, in a way unspecified by the proposition, so that actual amounts may be much less or nonexistant. Police, fire, and state mandated programs demand first consideration. "Bare bones" budgets will require a moratorium on development, cuts in numbers of activities and classes, imposition of fees and raising of current fees, cuts in personnel, and the closing of facilities for periods of time. These measures will be done in order for the service districts to exist the first year. When reserve funds are exhausted, the programs and personnel will have steeper cuts, and higher fees will be charged if no new money can be found. This is a self-defeating economic tread-

Contra Costa Park Council is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California. The Council is dedicated to fostering the natural beauty of the county, preserving open space, and providing opportunity for healthful recreation. Contributions ($2 a year for students; $5 a year and up for individuals; $10 a year and up for organizations) are tax-deductible.

mill. In a very few years, most service districts will simply go out of business.

The city park and recreation programs will suffer a similar fate. It is estimated that the 15 cities in the county will lose $19.3 million of the $29 million they now collect for all services. Safety and health have the first demands upon the cities, with parks at the bottom.

The East Bay Regional Park District's budget would be cut from $18 million to $5.1 million, with part of the latter figure coming from reserves. Large personnel cuts will have to be made and fees and charges doubled. The District expects to have to close 17 of 37 park and recreation areas. Tax money would be collected by the counties, as it is now, but the District would no longer be able to set its own tax rate under limits granted by the Legislature. The counties have already informed the District that state mandated programs would take almost all money, and they see no funds being allotted to the District. The Regional Park District will be close to going out of business if new sources of revenues are not found.

Governmental

Under Proposition 13, all future tax monies for all public services will be distributed at the discretion of the County Supervisors (Alameda County will be cut 70%; Contra Costa 66%). Proposition 13 has further barriers to the passage of new taxes for local purposes. What will happen to the service districts, city park facilities, and EBRPD? If any new money can be found to operate them, the money will have to come from State or federal sources. Perhaps you are beginning to understand what happens to local control in the decision making process! Curiously, Proposition 13 could create a more distant and larger government than we have now. If local services, provided by local governments, are not to break down entirely, new revenues will have to be found under state aegis, in ways which would not be under local control.

Safety

The helicopter public safety program of EBRPD would be discontinued under Proposition 13. We have recognized the necessity of this method of safety for park lands in our urban areas, both for policing and for rescue operations. The District helicopters have also cooperated with county and city law enforcement agencies to our great benefit. Dismissal of this service means a loss of protection for park and residential lands.

The Future

Don't die! Don't move! Don't let your house go through any change of ownership! The taxes will be reassessed - to your or your survivors' great horror. As businesses and industries change ownership far fewer times than homes, the tax burden slowly shifts to - the homeowner!

The Park Council regards the recent rise in property prices and the consequent reassessments as decidely in need of adjustment. Property taxes, held in the straightjacket of current law, are no longer equitable. We deplore the State Legislature's inability to understand the depth of the problem. However, we deplore even more the insidious results of Proposition 13 - destruction of our park and recreation systems, loss of local control, and erosion of our long held community recreation and open space investments. We see no reason to exchange one straight jacket for another, and we ask for reason and responsibility from all - voters and office holders alike.

The Contra Costa Park Council strongly urges a no vote on Proposition 13.

**LANDMARK STATUS FOR MT. DIABLO** - Susan Watson

Sunday, April 23rd, dawned early on Mt. Diablo. Already, bird watchers were out for the morning bird chorus, and campers were rising in the cool air. High clouds, at first obscuring the sun, lessened as the morning progressed, and by 10 AM, park employees were cleaning the top of the mountain parking lot, getting ready for a great event. Officials of the San Ramon Valley Historical Society were checking lists and overseeing preparations.

This Sunday was to be an auspicious occasion! Mt. Diablo was to be dedicated at 2 o'clock in the afternoon as State Historical Landmark #905.

Several years of work had gone into this designation. Egon Pederson of Diablo was the prime mover, researching the history of the mountain, writing applications, and seeking endorsements of the designation from many groups and officials. The Park Council was one of the groups heartily endorsing landmark status.

At last, all was ready. Warm spring sunshine greeted the crowds of State and local dignitaries and wellwishers who came to the top of the mountain. People murmured among themselves about how beautiful the mountain was this day with its brilliant fields of poppies, lupines and tall, lush grasses, so welcome after long drought. There was rejoicing at the appearance of sturdy new growth in the fire-blackened areas and at the great display of Zygadene lilies with their racemes of white flowers shining through the fire-torn chaparral.

Al Jones, President of the San Ramon Valley Historical Society, opened the dedication ceremony with the introduction of honored guests, and Dr. Dennis Nyberg of Alamo's San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church gave the invocation. Girl Scout and Boy Scout Troops presented the colors, while the 561 Air Force Band rousingly played the National Anthem.

Egon Pederson conducted the remainder of the ceremony, speaking movingly of the mountain and his and others' work in bringing the State Landmark status to completion. Guest speaker Senator John Nejedly, who for so long has fought to preserve the mountain, reminded his audience that there remains much work to be done.

Finally, the plaque for State Historic Landmark #905 was unveiled by Dr. Steve C. Kemiji of the State Historical Resources Commission. Chief Ranger George Weldon formally accepted the plaque, which is mounted in a setting of rocks gathered from various places on Mt. Diablo. These rocks are remainders of the various geologic formation periods of the mountain - sedimentary rocks with their ancient shells, old lavas, and metamorphic rocks of various kinds. The handsome and meaningful monument, built by the rangers of the park, is capped by an arch stone which matches the plaque.

As the closing prayers of Dr. Nyberg ended, we in the audience knew we were blessed with this unique and beautiful mountain, with the citizens who value this place, and with the energy of people like Egon Pederson who give so much of themselves to preserve Mt. Diablo.

Go to the mountain this summer. Look for the plaque at the foot of the stairway leading to the observation house. Most of all, enjoy the mountain's beauty and new life, and then thank the many people who have worked to preserve it for us and for our children. Renew your own dedication in your own way to Mt. Diablo's continuing history.

## SUMMER HELP FOR WILD CREATURES

The Alexander Lindsay Junior Museum is again caring for this year's tiny orphans and injured creatures. Won't you help them by offering supplies, service, money? The Museum is located at 1901 First Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA 94596; telephone 935-1978.

## MT. DIABLO INTERPRETIVE CENTER OPENING
- Joy Meagher

The Mt. Diablo Interpretive Center at the summit of Mt. Diablo is now open to the public. Located on the ground floor of the Summit House, the Center is devoted to helping visitors better enjoy and become more knowledgeable about Mt. Diablo, one of the unique island mountains of the world. Interpretive exhibits display Mt. Diablo's plant and animal life, geology, trails and scenic beauty. Publications for sale include a summit "view finder", a check list of Mt. Diablo birds, and an illustrated guide to the trees of the mountain, as well as books on Bay Area natural history.

Established by members of the Mt. Diablo Interpretive Association in cooperation with Mt. Diablo State Park, the Interpretive Center is staffed on weekends by volunteers. More volunteers are needed. If you would enjoy spending a day atop Mt. Diablo in the mountain's "room with a view", call Joy Meagher: 685-5702.

### NEWSLETTER WELCOMES SUPPORT

Like just about everything else, the costs of publishing the Newsletter have soared with inflation. The Council would be ecstatic to receive your contribution to lighten the financial load and perhaps make it possible to increase the frequency of issue. Please help if you can.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### HIKING SCHEDULE

Beginning hikers! A series of 3 hikes are being offered by the Outings Committee of the local Sierra Club to help beginning hikers venture into our beautiful parks. The first hike is June 3 Sat. Beginners Hike II. Don de Fremery (837-5646) leads a moderate 2B loop through Redwood Regional Park. Meet 8:30 AM at Skyline Gate.

June 10 Sat. Beginners Hike III. Don de Fremery (837-5646) ends the beginners hikes with a 3B trail up Havey Canyon at Wildcat Canyon Park. Meet 8:30 AM at the Wildcat Canyon Parking lot off McBryde Avenue.

SUMMER SCHEDULE: Bring lunch and liquids unless otherwise noted. May 20, Sat. Moonlight Hike at Black Diamond Park. Reservations required. Call Jeanne Harmon at 685-4393.

May 27 Sat. Sunol Wilderness hike. Don de Fremery (837-5646) leads a grand tour of 16 miles and 3100 foot elevation gain. Car pool from Walnut Creek BART at 8:15; drivers at Sunol by 9 AM.

May 27-29 Sat.-Mon. Beginner's Backpacking and Car Camping. Rich Sexton (757-6991) leads a trip to Malakoff Diggings State Park. Each person handles his own commissary. Reservations needed; call Rich for details.

June 11, Sun. Redwood Regional Park. Charlotte Watson (376-7880) leads a moderate 2B loop. Meet 8:30 AM at Redwood Gate off Redwood Road.

June 18 Sun. Briones Additions. Harry Reeves (625-3612) leads a leisurely 2B hike. Meet 9 AM at Taylor and Pleasant Hill Roads.

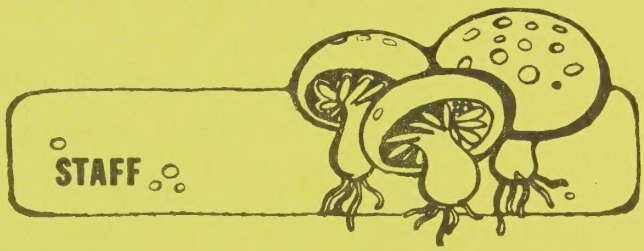
June 25 Sun. King Canyon Shuttle. Bob and Sue Watson lead a leisurely 1A family hike at Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Meet Valle Vista parking lot 1 mile west of Moraga on Canyon Road at 10 AM.

July 1 Sat. Mitchell Canyon. Jeannie Harmon (685-4393) leads a 1B hike to Deer Flat. Meet at Mitchell Canyon Parking lot at 9 AM.

July 29 Sat. Bear Creek Trail. Don de Fremery (837-5646) leads a hike on newly opened Bear Creek Trail. A 3B loop around Briones Reservoir. Meet EBMUD's Bear Creek Trail. A 3B loop around Briones Reservoir. Meet EBMUD's Bear Creek parking lot 8:30 AM.

August 12 Sat. Pt. Pinole Regional Park. Neil Southwick leads a leisurely 1A family hike. Meet at main parking lot at 10 AM.

August 19 Sat. Las Trampas. Otto Habensak (939-8608) leads a moonlight hike. Reservations required; call Otto for details.

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